

The Engine Business News

Leading Holistic Business Advisors & Specialists
Business Insights Quarter 1 - 02/25



Christine Rankin

Business Advisor - Leadership Expert



Peter Cooke

Business Advisor - CX Expert



Catherine Cooke (nee Sherwood)

Founder and Leading Business Advisor

When the Unexpected Happens – Will Your Business Survive?

One moment, your business is thriving. The next, everything changes. A sudden life event pulls you away, your biggest client leaves, or your top-performing employee is poached by a competitor. These scenarios aren't just hypotheticals—they happen every day, and they can shake even the most established businesses to their core.

But what happens when the crisis isn't just about business?

Last week, a client of mine walked into a meeting looking unwell. Encourage to seek medical assistance, days later, they received a devastating diagnosis—terminal cancer. In another case, a business owner casually mentioned experiencing chest pains. I urged him to visit a medical centre immediately. Upon arrival, he was upgraded to an ambulance, and within moments, he was in full cardiac arrest. In both these situations, The Engine Limited was there—not just as advisors but as trusted partners who could step in on an interim part-time basis to ensure operations continued. While these business owners and their families focused on their health and personal matters, we provided business continuity, leadership, and stability during their time of need.

Now Imagine This...

Your best-performing salesperson—the one responsible for nearly 40% of your revenue—is suddenly poached by a competitor. You're left scrambling to replace them, retrain someone new, and rebuild lost momentum. Revenue drops, and pressure mounts.

Or worse—your biggest client, who accounts for 50% of your business, decides to leave. Whether it's due to industry shifts, a change in leadership, or them simply outgrowing your services, their departure leaves a gaping hole in your cash flow. Suddenly, your once-stable business is in survival mode, and you're forced into reactive decision-making.

These aren't rare occurrences—they happen every day to businesses just like yours. And many business owners only seek help when they're already in crisis, scrambling for solutions.

But what if you had a business continuity plan in place? A strategic roadmap designed to safeguard your business against the unexpected—whether it's a health emergency, an employee departure, or a key client loss. With the right strategic business advisor or coach, you can build resilience, mitigate risks, and implement contingency plans that ensure your business isn't left vulnerable when challenges arise.

The Best Part? You Don't Have to Do It Alone The government could contribute up to 50%—\$5000—towards this support. That means you can access expert guidance, build a resilient business model, and create a future-proof strategy—all with financial assistance.

Why Take the Risk?

You've worked hard to build your business. Don't let one unexpected event take it all away overnight. Now is the time to prepare, protect, and plan for the future. Let's talk about how to fortify your business today—before a crisis forces you to. **Because being prepared isn't just smart—it's essential.**

© The Engine Limited

Charity starts with having a service



Celebrating Catherine Cooke: A Heart of Service and Community Impact

In today's world, where the gap between those who have and those who need seems to grow wider, it's inspiring to meet individuals who dedicate themselves to bridging that divide. One such individual is Catherine Cooke, our Director at The Engine Limited, whose service to people extends beyond mere business advice. Catherine embodies a service-oriented heart, a trait that has been shaped through her own life experiences.

A Service Heart Born from Adversity: Catherine often reflects on her upbringing and the lessons learned during her formative years. Experiencing adversity firsthand has given her a profound understanding of what it feels like to be alone or marginalized, and it ignites a fierce commitment within her to ensure others don't have to experience the same feelings. "If we can be the change for others, the only thing standing in our way is ourselves," she believes. This mantra drives her to seek out opportunities for meaningful impact in her community.

A Humble Hero: Though much could be said about Catherine's numerous contributions, she often prefers to remain humble, focusing more on the needs of others than on her achievements. Nevertheless, her recent endeavors speak volumes about her commitment and effectiveness. Over the last few years, Catherine has been instrumental in organising community fundraisers and events that not only generate financial support but also foster a sense of empowerment among the vulnerable populations in our area. She has done this alongside a heavy workload helping business owners strengthen their businesses as a leading business advisor/coach.

Driving Change in Muriwai: One of Catherine's standout achievements was a three-week fundraiser that successfully raised over \$76,000 for Muriwai residents in need. This remarkable effort, supported by the generosity of the community, is an example of how Catherine mobilizes resources to support those facing hardships.

Empowering Women Through Dress for Success Auckland: More recently, Catherine has channeled her energy toward two successful events for Dress for Success Auckland, which have collectively raised \$30,000 and garnered over 6,500 donations of gently loved or new clothing. These donations not only provide essential clothing but also empower women who are preparing for job interviews and seeking self-sufficiency. Robyn from Dress for Success expressed heartfelt gratitude to Catherine, stating, **"A huge thank you for everything that you have done to support Dress for Success in our mission to empower vulnerable women across Auckland to thrive in life."** Robyn's words encapsulate the far-reaching impact of Catherine's work. She has fostered awareness, built partnerships, and mobilised funds in a way that significantly uplifts women in our community. Her actions lay the groundwork for necessary support that enables women to climb the ladder toward a better future, particularly in the current economic climate where so many face financial difficulties.

The Growing Need in Our Community: As Robyn highlighted, there are over 31,000 women in Auckland alone currently on the Job Seeker benefit, with many more not qualifying for support due to narrowly missing government thresholds. Catherine's commitment to helping these women shines brightly, particularly when financial pressures like increased mortgage rates and a rising cost of living make it more challenging for them to thrive.

A Lasting Impact: Catherine Cooke's heart for service is evident in everything she does. Her passion to create positive change has left an indelible mark on our community and the organisations she supports. As we reflect on her contributions, we are reminded of the fundamental importance of uplifting one another and the power of collective action. While Catherine may not seek recognition for her tireless work, it is vital to acknowledge her incredible spirit and the transformative impact she has had on the lives of so many. As Robyn expressed,

"From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for everything."

Catherine's journey is not just about individual achievements but about the collective upliftment of those around her. If we can all bring even a fraction of her commitment and passion into our communities, we can truly be the change we wish to see in the world.

moneyfit.me

enable.me
financial strategy & coaching

Dress for Success Sponsor:- Helping Women Get Ahead – moneyfit.me & enable.me

At Dress for Success, we're all about helping women achieve financial confidence and independence, because when women thrive, communities thrive. That's why we were so excited to team up with moneyfit.me and enable.me to support financial wellbeing for New Zealand women. Money can feel overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be. moneyfit.me makes financial education and wellbeing accessible and easy to fit into our busy lives, while enable.me offers expert guidance to help women take control of their money and future. Together, they're helping Kiwi women build financial security and confidence - something we're 100% behind. If you're thinking about how to support the financial wellbeing of women in your workplace, visit their website to see how you can get moneyfit: moneyfit.me Workplace Wellbeing.

URL Tracking Link: <https://moneyfit.me/workplace-wellbeing>

Speaking of Adversity



Let's support Catherine & others ...

Catherine Cooke's heart for service is evident in everything she does. Her passion to create positive change has left an indelible mark on our community and the organisations she supports. As we reflect on her contributions, we are reminded of the fundamental importance of uplifting one another and the power of collective action.

However, what makes Catherine's story even more compelling is that she herself is currently in the fight for her life. Despite her own health challenges, she continues to prioritise helping others, dedicating her time and energy to empower those in need. Catherine's unwavering commitment to service, even in the face of adversity, is a testament to her character. On 20 November, 2024 Catherine was diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer.



**Catherine supported by her friend
Bridgette Jackson - Equal Exes**

Catherine's journey is not just about individual achievements but about the collective upliftment of those around her. As she fights her own battles, she remains a beacon of hope and resilience for all, exemplifying that even in our darkest moments, we can still strive to make a positive difference for others.

Catherine refuses to let her health diagnosis slow her service heart, channeling her energy into making a real difference for others facing breast cancer. With unwavering determination, she is hosting a Pink Ribbon Brunch at Allely Estate on 30 March 2025, aiming to raise \$40,000 for the Breast Cancer Foundation. But her mission goes beyond fundraising—she is also leading a petition to secure funding for a vital drug that was approved but remains unfunded for early-stage triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC), ensuring that others don't have to fight the same battle without access to life-saving treatment. Meanwhile, her dear friend Stephanie Armstrong has set up a Givealittle page to help Catherine afford the drug she desperately needs to beat early-stage TNBC and stay alive. Through it all, Catherine's resilience, advocacy, and heart for service shine brighter than ever.

Please join Catherine's Pink Ribbon Brunch [here](#) - this is for men and women.

Can or can't come to the lunch - please help Catherine reach her \$40,000 fundraiser [here](#).

Catherine has helped so many people - let's help Catherine fund the drug to beat early stage TNBC so she can continue to help others. Donate to Catherine's GIVEALITTLE PAGE [here](#).

The Power of a Plan

Knowing your numbers is just the beginning. The next step is having an objective and a structured plan to meet those numbers. A business that is aligned with its financial needs operates with clarity, purpose, and certainty.

At The Engine, we work with business owners to build a Strategic Sales Strategy Framework that is supported by:

- A 90-day action goal plan
- Defined measurements of reporting and accountability
- Forward planning weeks in advance
- A structured roadmap to meet fiscal needs and personal financial goals

The Key to Success: Accountability

A solid strategy means nothing without execution. The key to success is being held to account—both by yourself and by an experienced advisor who knows what it takes to get you where you need to go. That's where The Engine steps in.



The Critical Factor: Guidance from Experience

Running a business can feel like swimming against the tide—exhausting, isolating, and sometimes even pulling you further from your goals. Without the right guidance, you may find yourself drifting off course or struggling just to stay afloat. Having someone experienced pull you in from the tide is crucial; they provide clarity, direction, and a steady hand to navigate challenges.

If you want to move from uncertainty to structure and from just surviving to thriving, **let's have a conversation**. It's time to take ownership of your business—and your return.

What Do I Really Own, and What Is My Return?

Many business owners don't truly know what they own, let alone what their actual return is.

They hustle every day, keeping the doors open, but when you strip it all back—what's really left? Some are unknowingly earning less than the minimum wage, while others are taking home more than their business can afford, essentially running an insolvent operation.

Yet, time and time again, we hear: "I need this business to sustain my personal life or return the investment back for what I have inputted."

The Reality of Your Numbers

Understanding your numbers is critical. Without clarity on your revenue, costs, and profitability, you're operating blind. Many business owners only look at their bank balance to gauge success—but that's a false measure.

Do you know:

- How much it actually costs to open your doors every day?
- Whether your pricing reflects true profit or just covers expenses?
- If your personal drawings are sustainable for the business?

When you don't know these numbers, you're at risk of overworking for too little or draining the business dry without realising it.



At The Engine, we're all about supporting businesses with the right tools and strategies to grow, but like many business owners, we found ourselves juggling multiple demands and unable to be chained to our desks 24/7. We needed a solution that allowed us to stay responsive and service-oriented without sacrificing efficiency or time. That's why we engaged Cleva.bot—a game-changer in how we connect with our clients.

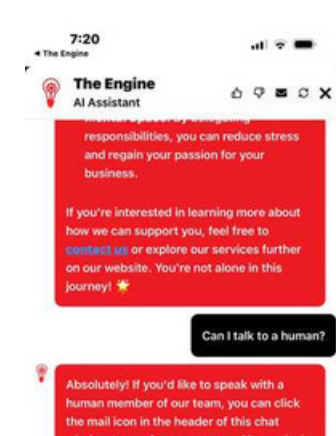
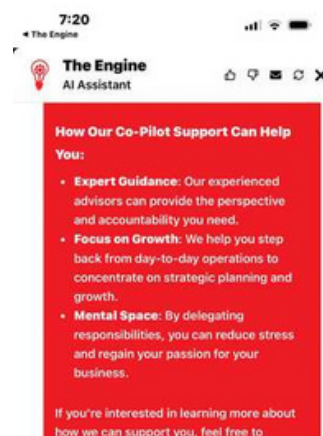
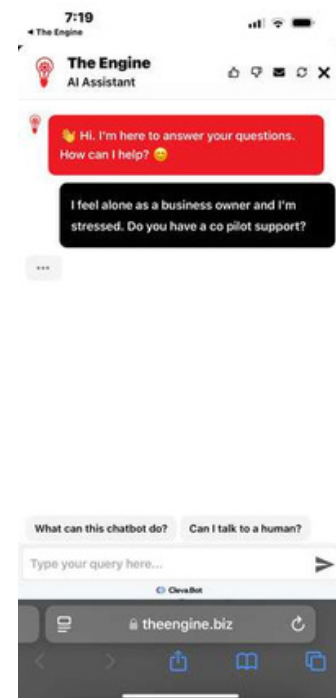
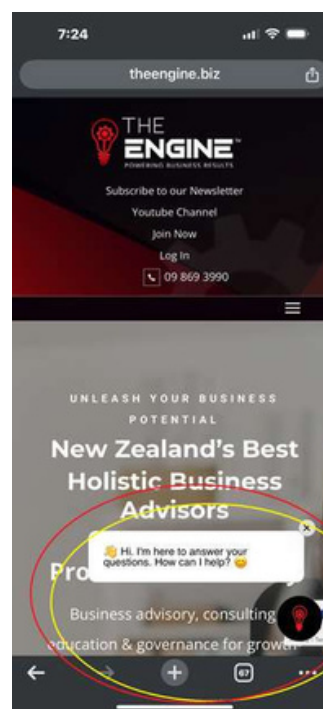
Since integrating Cleva.bot, we've seen a huge shift in how we manage inquiries, provide support, and maintain client relationships. It ensures that whether we're in a meeting, delivering a workshop, or off-site, our clients still receive timely and relevant responses. This has not only strengthened our customer relationships but also freed up our time to focus on high-value activities—without compromising service. If you're looking to scale your business while staying connected with your customers, Cleva.bot is a must-have tool!

🚀 Game-Changing Results with Cleva.bot! 🚀

We've been using Cleva.bot, and the impact on our business has been phenomenal! This AI-driven tool is transforming the way we engage with customers, streamline processes, and drive growth.

Here's what we're experiencing:

- ✅ Stronger Customer Relationships – With Cleva.bot handling instant responses and personalised interactions, we're able to engage with customers more effectively and build trust faster.
- ✅ Increased Growth – By automating key touchpoints, we're seeing higher conversion rates and smoother workflows, allowing us to scale without adding extra pressure to our team.
- ✅ Efficiency & Productivity – No more wasted time on repetitive tasks—Cleva.bot keeps things moving, so we can focus on strategy and innovation.



We're not the only ones seeing results—businesses across industries are leveraging Cleva.bot to create smarter, more dynamic customer experiences. If you're looking to scale, strengthen relationships, and future-proof your business, it's time to take a closer look at Cleva.bot! **Contact the team at Cleva.bot and tell them The Engine recommended them.**

The Harsh Reality: Is Your Business Running Inefficiently



Without You Even Realising It?

Case Study: The Cost of Poor Documentation and Alignment

Karl, a business owner in his late 50s, spent over 20 years building his company from the ground up. He was deeply involved in every aspect of the business, ensuring everything ran smoothly. However, when his key operations manager left abruptly, she took over seven years' worth of undocumented knowledge with her. Processes were not recorded, client relationships were in her hands, and operational efficiencies disappeared overnight.

Shortly after, Karl was diagnosed with a terminal illness. His business, already struggling to adjust to the loss of key personnel, was further weakened by his absence. Employees continued their daily tasks, but without clear guidance, much of the work being done was misaligned with business needs. Payroll was going out every week for work that didn't contribute to the company's bottom line.

As Karl's health declined, so did the business. With no clear leadership, no documented processes, and employees working in misaligned roles, the company became unsustainable. What could have been a thriving legacy ended up being a cautionary tale of why businesses need structured documentation, leadership succession plans, and strategic alignment.

Why a Business WOF Audit is Essential

Much like a vehicle needs a regular Warrant of Fitness to ensure it's roadworthy, businesses require ongoing audits to stay on track and function efficiently. The Engine's Business WOF Audit will give you a clear, honest picture of where you stand and provide actionable steps to realign your team, boost efficiency, and increase the value of your business. Book your Business Warrant of Fitness Audit today and get back in the driver's seat. Learn more about our Business WOF Audit [here](#).

Many business owners are so deep in the trenches of day-to-day operations that they don't see the bigger picture. They work tirelessly, constantly putting out fires, managing endless tasks, and ensuring the wheels keep turning. But what if those wheels are just spinning in place? What if, despite all the effort, the business is not moving forward in the right direction?

The Hidden Cost of Inefficiency

Too many businesses today are falling well short of their potential. Owners are so absorbed in daily operations that they operate at an inefficient level, where leadership is barely visible. Without clear direction, the value of the business starts to dilute, and employees, despite working hard, find themselves trapped in a hamster wheel of activity that isn't aligned with where the business actually needs to go. This is the silent killer of business growth—when activity doesn't translate into progress.

The Warning Signs Your Business Is Stalling

If you're experiencing any of these symptoms, it's time for a Business Warrant of Fitness Audit: You're constantly firefighting: Every day feels like a battle to resolve issues instead of making strategic moves.

Leadership is invisible: Your team is working, but without clear leadership, they're uncertain about the business's direction.

Lack of strategic alignment: Effort is being put in, but results are not reflecting the energy expended. Business value is eroding: Without a clear roadmap, your business isn't growing in value, making it less attractive to investors or potential buyers.

"A Costly Mistake: Why Due Process Matters in Employee Dismissals"



Home / New Zealand

Queenstown burger bar Fergburger dismisses employee after customer racially targeted



By Ben Tomsett

Multimedia Journalist - Dunedin, NZ Herald - NZ Herald - 18 Feb, 2025 05:59 PM 2 mins to read

Queenstown's iconic burger joint Fergburger has fired the employee involved in the incident where a customer was given a receipt containing a racial slur.

A friend of the customer posted the receipt, dated Sunday at 3.35pm, to social media on Monday afternoon.

They allege their friend did not give their name to the server, who named them on the receipt as "ching chang". Full article is [here](#).

The Engine Limited's response:-

Responding to Employee Dismissals: Following Due Process

The recent dismissal of a Fergburger employee over a deeply inappropriate receipt has put a spotlight on how businesses handle serious misconduct. While we were not involved in this case, we know from experience that many employers do not follow the correct process for instant dismissals—often leading to costly grievances at the Employment Relations Authority.

Ensuring Your Employment Agreement is Clear

To protect your business and uphold professional standards, your Employment Agreement should explicitly outline:

- ✓ What constitutes serious misconduct, such as racial discrimination, harassment, or breaches of company policy.
- ✓ The disciplinary process, including investigations, employee rights, and potential consequences.
- ✓ Employer obligations to act fairly and follow due process, even in urgent situations.

Following the Correct Process

Dismissals—especially instant ones—must be procedurally fair. A rushed decision without a proper investigation can expose your business to legal risk. Engaging an employment law expert ensures you:

- ◆ Conduct a thorough and impartial investigation.
- ◆ Give the employee a chance to respond to allegations.
- ◆ Follow the correct disciplinary steps before making a final decision.

Managing Your Brand & Public Statements

When faced with public scrutiny, your response matters. We encourage business owners to:

- ✦ Avoid discussing specific disciplinary actions in the media. Instead, confirm an investigation was conducted and due process followed.
- ✦ Emphasise that the actions of one employee do not reflect the company's values.
- ✦ Consider working with a PR or crisis management expert to protect your brand reputation.

A well-handled response not only ensures legal compliance but also reassures customers, employees, and stakeholders that your business stands for integrity and fairness. If you need guidance on employment matters, now is the time to engage an experienced business advisor to review your policies and procedures.

Launching : Unbreakable Spirit

Two Businesswoman's Journey through Life and Adversity

Christine Rankin & Catherine Cooke have brought to life their vision as leading business advisor/coaches/consultants to speak about **all things in life** through their lens. This podcast will be no hold barred conversations, diving deep in to the raw & unfiltered realities of our lives and others, capturing a sense of resilience, strength, and determination.

Welcome to our podcast, we are your hosts Christine and Catherine, and we are thrilled to embark on this journey with you. Today, we're set the stage for what this podcast is all about and release our first podcast for you our loyal business readers before we release publicly.

And that is a wrap - we released the last of our first series - Episode 9 on building resilience. Many have enjoyed the personal 'life' stories & advice.



[Click here to watch our](#)
[Unbreakable Spirit You](#)
[Tube Channel](#)

UNLEASH YOUR BUSINESS POTENTIAL WITH



New Zealand's Best Holistic Business Advisors and Specialist Provider Community



View The Engine's full library of resources and tips from our Provider network for helpful information on a range of business topics.

[Full Resource Library](#)

***Business advisory, consulting, education
& governance for growth-focused business owners***

businessadvice@theengine.biz



09 869 3990